

## Some questions to talk about

1. Pope Francis said: Whenever we encounter another person in love, we learn something new about God. (272)  
How has this opened my heart to those I encounter each day?
2. Pope Francis recommends: certain attitudes and attributes as critical for sharing the Good News: approachability, patience, dialogue, warmth and welcome which is non-judgemental. (165)  
As I look back on my life this week, which of these am I aware of, which do I need to develop?

## Take a moment to pray

### Be still and know that you are in the presence of God.

We pray for everyone who is a bit lost today: for people who find no meaning to their lives, for people caught up in addictions and the pursuit of easy pleasures that can't make them truly happy, for those who feel isolated and insignificant.

We pray for everyone who is a follower of Jesus.

We ask for His help to be like our Good Shepherd as we try to seek out those who are lost and to help them to find their way home to Him.

**Loving Lord Jesus,  
your baptism gave you the power  
to reach out to those  
who were broken and hurting.  
May our baptism and our encounters  
with you  
and our listening to your word  
impel us to reach out with compas-  
sion  
to those around us who are in need.  
Amen.**



## Leaflet Three Jesus is alive – go and tell my brothers.

# Proclaim'15

building missionary parishes



### Eric's Story



For years I'd walked past Our Lady's Church on the way to work. I wasn't a church-goer and neither were my family, so what did it mean to me? Until one day I was walking past and I saw a sign next to the door. I was not in a good place that day. I'd got involved with some people and situations that I was not very proud of. I felt really low and I didn't think anyone could help. As I walked past the church that day the new sign struck me – it just said: "For sinners only". I felt as though someone had put it there for me. I didn't do anything that day, I just carried on to work as usual, but something had changed in me. The next day the sign was still there so I tried the door and it was open. I went in. There was no one else in the church so I just sat down in the quiet – a few candles were flickering and I kept looking at them. After a while I left. The next day, and the day after, I did the same. On the fourth day, after I had sat for a while, the priest came over and said, "I've noticed you popping in – can I help?" I told him my story and felt a bit better, but that was it. I didn't go back and in fact my life got worse until one morning I decided not to get up and as I lay in bed I found myself saying to God, "I need to sort my life out." Within minutes the postman came and put a letter through the letter box. I wondered what it could be – so I got out of bed and found it was an invitation from the Church to come along and learn what it meant to be a Catholic. I felt my prayer had been answered. The next Easter I was baptised, confirmed and made my holy communion. Life has not always been easy since, but I know there is a place for me in the heart of God – and it all started with a banner outside a building I had walked past for years!

## Scripture: Luke 15:1-7

One day when many tax collectors and other outcasts came to listen to Jesus, the Pharisees and the teachers of the Law started grumbling, “This man welcomes outcasts and even eats with them!” So Jesus told them this parable: “Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them—what do you do? You leave the other ninety-nine sheep in the pasture and go looking for the one that got lost until you find it. When you find it, you are so happy that you put it on your shoulders and carry it back home. Then you call your friends and neighbours together and say to them, ‘I am so happy I found my lost sheep. Let us celebrate!’ In the same way, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine respectable people who do not need to repent.”



## Reflection

The joy of the Gospel is the joy of God. It is God’s joy when someone finds their way back to Him, to His peace, to where they belong. Today many people are a bit lost. It’s easy to get caught up in things that do us no good. Lost in a life that’s about money and possessions. Lost in addictions, grief or isolation. Lost in a life that seems to have little meaning or direction. Lost in bitterness or anger. So many of our neighbours and friends are lost without the joy that meeting Jesus brings.

Sometimes as a Church we have devoted our efforts to looking after the ninety-nine sheep safe in the fold. Today it is more honest to say that we look after the few sheep still attending our churches or our schools but the majority of our sheep who are ‘lost’ are too often left to fend for themselves.

Can we be a Church that is prepared to leave the safe confines of our buildings and seek out the lost sheep? Sometimes we are the ninety-nine sheep who might be lost from time to time, some of us repeatedly. We have a gift to share, the joy of knowing the mercy of God. So many of our brothers and sisters are lost, without that gift in their lives.

## Questions to ponder

**Have you ever lost your way in life?  
What brought you back to God?**

**Who do you think are the people the Good Shepherd  
is seeking out today?**

## From “The Joy of the Gospel” by Pope Francis

Whenever we encounter another person in love, we learn something new about God. Whenever our eyes are opened to acknowledge the other, we grow in the light of faith and knowledge of God. (272)

All this demands on the part of the evangelizer certain attitudes which foster openness to the message: approachability, readiness for dialogue, patience, a warmth and welcome which is non-judgmental. (165)

